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Westminster, January 21.

HIS Majesty came this Day to the House of Peers, and being in His Royal Robes, seated on the Throne with the usual Solemnity, Sir Charles Dalton Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a Message from His Majesty to the House of Commons, commanding their Attendance in the House of Peers; the Commons being come thither accordingly, His Majesty was pleased to make the following most gracious Speech.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I Am sensible you are met together in Expectation of being informed of the present Situation of publick Affairs, and of receiving that Satisfaction, which the Expences already made, and the Apprehension of their being continued for some longer Time, make it just and reasonable for you to desire.

The Execution of the Preliminary Articles, and the opening the Congress at Soissons, laid a Foundation for you to entertain Hopes of seeing, very soon, the happy Fruits and Effects of a general Pacification.

But the various and extensive Views, which fell under Consideration, in settling and reconciling the different Interests and Pretensions of so many different Powers, appear'd to be a Work of so much Time and Difficulty, that the Project of a Provisional Treaty was thought of, as a proper Expedient; which being concerted and negociated among the Ministers of the principal Powers, Parties to the Treaties of Hanover and Vienna, was approved of by Me and My Allies, not without reasonable Hopes of the Concurrence of the Imperial Court, and the Court of Madrid.

But no definitive Answer being yet return'd by either of them, nor the Project of the Provisional Treaty either accepted or rejected, the Fate of Europe is still held in Suspence, labouring under Difficulties, that unavoidably attend such a doubtful and undetermin'd Condition.

It is with no small Concern, that I am again oblig'd, to speak to my Parliament in this State of Uncertainty, nor am I insensible of the Burthens which my Subjects bear, and that in our present Circumstances, some may be induced to think, that an actual War is preferable to such a doubtful and imperfect Peace. But as the Exchange is easy to be made at any Time, and as I am confident, I shall not be thought backward in doing Myself and the Nation Justice, when a proper Occasion calls upon Me for it, I hope you will believe, that a just Regard for the Ease and Interest of my People, alone prevailed upon Me, rather to suffer some temporary Inconveniencies, with the daily Prospect of obtaining a safe and honourable Peace, than too precipitately to kindle a War in Europe, and to plunge the Nation into still greater and unknown Expences.

But how disagreeable soever these Delays may be, nothing is more unjust than to impute them to the Conduct of Me or My Allies: No Endeavours indeed have been wanting to separate and dissolve the happy Union that is establish'd among us; but long Experience and repeated Proofs of mutual Fidelity, have so strengthen'd and cemented this Alliance, founded upon, and united by common Interest, that all Attempts to weaken it, or to create Jealousies and Diffidence among us, have proved as vain and fruitless, as the Insinuations to the contrary are false and groundless.

It will nevertheless be incumbent upon us to bring this important Transaction to a speedy and certain Decision, that, if a Conclusion can be put to it, consistent with the Security and Preservation of the Rights, Privileges and Possessions of Great Britain, and my Allies, the Blessings of Peace may be diffused throughout Europe, and My Kingdoms again enjoy the happy Effects of a settled Tranquility: Or, if this cannot be had, that the Allies may unite with Vigour and Resolution, and exert themselves in procuring that Justice and Satisfaction which has been so long delayed. If this should unavoidably be the Case, I depend upon the Zeal and Affection of this Par-